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FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF

LAVINIA L. DOCK



THE NURSING SYSTEM OF ITALIAN HOSPITALS

(Concluded from page 651)

AN important paper on this subject was written by Signora Angelo Celli, of Rome, in 1901.* Signora Celli deals with the subject as fearlessly as does Dr. Hamilton, of France, in her articles. Space does not allow us to give it in full, as we should like to do.

Beginning by sketching the reforms of Florence Nightingale and the systems of the great "free" nursing institutions of Hamburg and Berlin, she goes on to describe the nursing system of Italy, and we are glad to find that the articles on that subject which have appeared in this JOURNAL are verified by her statements and descriptions. After mentioning the Sisters of Charity she says:

"The servant-nurses are the ones who really attend to the sick. Few indeed are the hospitals where this is done by the sisters—for example, to a certain extent in Rome at San Giovanni Hospital, at the Cottolengo in Turin, at the Civil Hospital of Udine, etc. Still fewer are the examples, as at Pavia and in the Hospital S. Maria Nuova in Florence, where semi-religious orders of women who have taken no regular vows are in charge of the wards and perform all the most important and delicate duties for the sick. In all the other large hospitals the service is regulated as before described."

After discussing the economic side, of cheapness to the hospital where religious orders are in charge, she says:

"The discipline of the religious orders is certainly vastly superior to that of the lay nurses, and this is of extraordinary importance for those attending upon the sick. But the admirable discipline of the Catholic Church has this one defect: Instead of recognizing first the medical authority, it places first the religious authority. From this cause arise various stumbling-blocks. The service of the sick is looked upon as labor rewarded in heaven, and it is not considered necessary to teach it as a profession. It is regarded as a religious function.

"It has happened that sisters have refused to carry out medical orders for children, saying that it was much better they should become angels. In one instance, when a patient had a severe hemorrhage, instead of calling the physician the sister went for the priest. Another on a winter night allowed a patient with pneumonia to get up, and the latter was found by the physician, half-dressed and dying, kneeling upon the cold floor to pray.

"This is not said to criticise, for I am the first to recognize the great merits of the sisters. But science is to-day too far advanced, and to be a com-

* "La Donna Infermiera," by Anna Celli, in the *Unione Femminile*, Nos. 3 and 4 and 7 and 8 Milan, 1901.

petent nurse it is absolutely necessary that the nurse be thoroughly taught, and not limited to the religious service.

"The nurse should occupy herself solely with the sick and leave all else to be done by others. She should be exclusively subordinate to the medical officers and follow rigorously all their orders.

"She should be put through a practical and theoretical course, and be capable not only of recognizing grave symptoms, but also, in times of emergency, of applying the remedy. And before practising, she should be well instructed, partly by the physicians and surgeons, and partly by the trained and qualified head of nurses.

"She should not, from reasons of false modesty, leave the most important parts of the care of the sick to attendants, but it should be her highest duty and honor to have no ignorant person touch the patient.

"She should not wear a dark habit and immense head-dress, which impedes work and becomes a vehicle for micro-organisms, but choose a light, washable dress.

"Until such reforms can be made the religious sister can never be a real and model nurse in the modern sense of the word.

"To-day, the care of the sick in Italy is largely in the hands of lay persons, illiterate, and engaged as servants. In general they are admitted from the age of eighteen to forty years, in one hospital at fifteen, in another at sixteen. In another there is no rule. Usually only unmarried women are accepted, because the work requires that they should live in the hospital. However, this rule is not in force in a number of hospitals. In two * before being engaged as nurse the applicant must spend six months in the laundry. In other hospitals she is engaged without condition. In five she must give some unpaid time—in one two months, in another three, in another two years, in another forty days—before being definitely accepted. In one it is compulsory to attend instructions, in another it is voluntary. In some practical instruction is given. In others practical and theoretical instruction. At the end of the latter an examination is given.

"At Pavia a physician gives a course of two-months' teaching after the nurses demonstrate that they can read, write, and do simple arithmetic. At Ferrara the course lasts four months, with one lesson a week, and comprises medical and surgical work. At Siena the physicians give a theoretical course of six months. If the applicant cannot pass a satisfactory examination in this, he or she is not accepted. In Florence, every year, the physicians and surgeons give a practical and theoretical course of six months, and this, as at Rome, may be attended by applicants.

"These courses appear well on paper (and they certainly represent a great step in advance), but as actual fact they often do more harm than good. Instead of being of practical benefit they only serve to confuse the ideas of the pupils. The instructor should be able to descend to the level of the pupils, so as to explain things in a way they can understand. Certainly it is most difficult for a class of young persons who have scarcely gone through the elementary schools to understand any part of so complicated an organism as the human body.

"Instead of being made to memorize the skeleton and its parts would it not be better for the nurse to understand the daily functions of the body? So it

* In the original paper the names of all hospitals are given with the facts, but are omitted by us for the sake of brevity.

happens that, whether the course is taken or not, the ignorance of the pupils remains the same. Especially, even if the course is taken, they have no idea of asepsis and antisepsis, of the diets for the various maladies, of how to apply treatment, and so on. Who ever teaches them their duties towards the sick? Who shows them how to make a patient comfortable? Who drills them in the cleanliness so essential in a ward or sick-room? Who teaches so many other little essential points? The physician cannot do this. Often he does not know how himself. No one can teach this but a woman, and therefore the nurses must have a head nurse who can teach them.

"After having passed the requirements of the different hospitals they are taken into service under various economic conditions.

"The table which follows shows better than words the hours of work of the servant-nurses and their rates of payment.

"From this table it will be seen that their financial conditions are not brilliant, especially in comparison with the nature of the work they are called on to perform, and this is perhaps one reason why women of a higher grade do not enter the service.

"In many hospitals—for example, in Rome—in their free hours they have to do their own laundering. Few make any provision for old age; in others they are dismissed when no longer capable.

"As the result of insufficient pay the nurses demand fees from the patients. They have a marvellous art in extracting something, even from the poorest. The relations of the sick ones, hoping to get them better treatment, often give beyond their means.

"I do not know whether any hospitals forbid the taking of fees, but certainly in some the authorities count upon it in order to pay smaller wages. Then too this meagre payment often drives them into illicit or dishonest ways of gaining money.

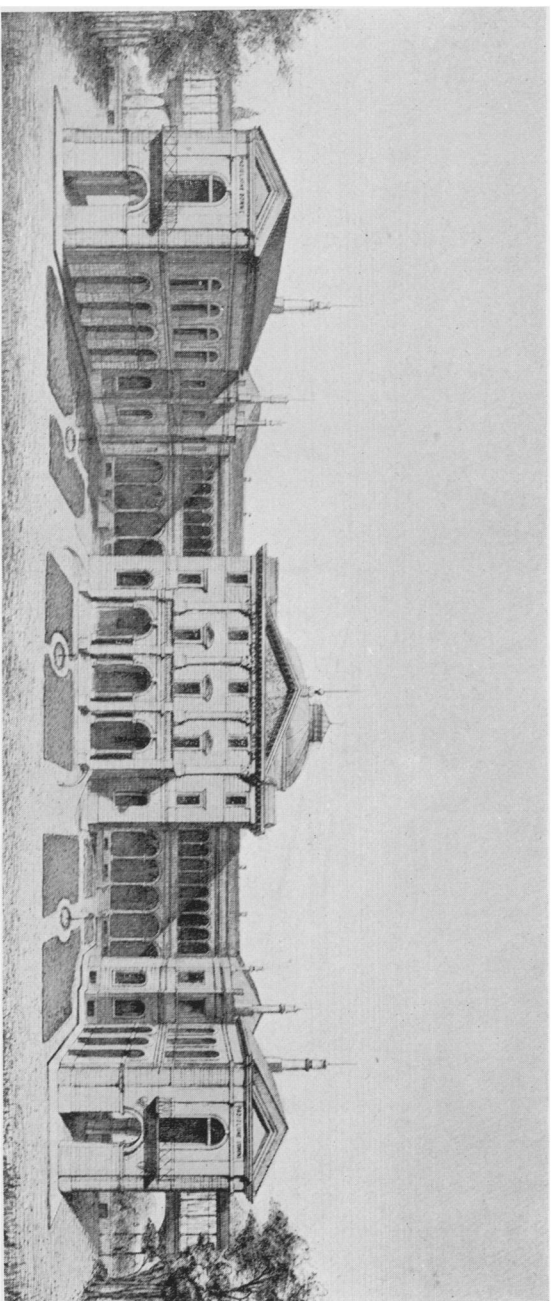
"In general the nurses have the daily care of from eight to fifteen patients, and twice as many by night, but there are hospitals where one nurse may have thirty and over to attend and wait on.

"Tuscany is undoubtedly the most advanced part of Italy in regard to hospital service. Siena and Florence especially have excellent rules. The work of the nurses is well regulated and their future is provided for.

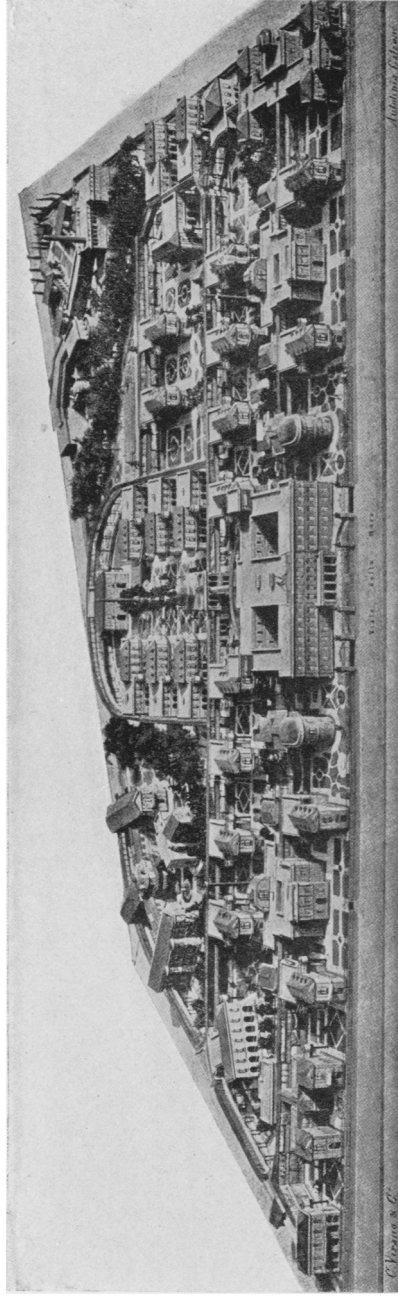
"On the other hand, in such centres as Turin, Milan, Rome, Naples, the service leaves much to be desired. Shameful conditions are found in one of the hospitals of Naples, where the patients nurse one another. In the last twenty years much has been done to improve the surroundings of the hospitals, but when will these most necessary reforms be made in the service? It is a question of the highest importance for the whole people: Of what use are hospitals if people will not go or stay there because they are badly treated?

"The service in private duty is even worse than in the hospitals and is in great need of improvement."

In the table of statistics Signora Celli gives the hours of work, the wages, the food, and the accommodations for nurses of some forty-five hospitals, with remarks on special points. For want of space we condense this. Six hospitals fix their hours of work at twelve. Several give from ten to fourteen. Several have irregular periods, as: first day, nineteen; second day, eleven; third day, eleven. The round is then repeated. Others of these arrangements are: first day, seventeen; second day, seventeen; third day, eight; fourth day, five; and



FRONT VIEW OF THE NEW HOSPITAL IN ROME



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE NEW HOSPITAL IN ROME

first day, thirteen; second day, eleven; third day, ten; fourth day, seventeen. Every four days one free. Another is: first day, seventeen; second day, twelve; third day, seventeen. Every three days one-half day and one night free. One or two models give a six and one or two an eight-hours' service, while one announces thirty-seven hours every third day! And another one, more inhuman yet, thirty to forty-eight hours consecutive service, and two others from twenty-four to forty-eight! The wages vary from what would equal two dollars per month (not week) to eleven dollars per month. Eighteen of these hospitals supply no food to their nurses; several give two meals a day; one, wine only. Some others give food by weight, while some others give them the patients' full diet. None of the meals sound over-abundant.

For sleeping-accommodations, seven hospitals give none. Of the others, the nurses are put up in numbers running from one in a room to forty-four in a dormitory described as "low and small." Several give the nurses small rooms in or near the wards.

Among the "remarks" are found such as this: "Every month eight to ten hours' rest," "every fifteen days three hours to go out," and one melancholy remark shows that the founding asylums supply some of the material which grows up into servant-nurses.

At the time when this article was written these enslaved beings were unorganized and little provision was made for their future, but within the last few years they have formed organizations and have thereby in many details improved their conditions. They now have a journal called *L'Infermiere*, or monthly organ of the Italian Federation of men and women hospital nurses and masseurs, and their league included in 1903 some twenty-nine cities. In a number of this journal which Signora Celli was kind enough to give me there was an announcement of their first National Congress, to be held in Rome in March of this year, and the programme looked as though there were some bright and serious minds at work over their problems.

If this body of workers could little by little elevate their position and improve their rank and file it would certainly not retard and might hasten the coming of the educated nurse. These hospital servant-nurses could then become what their lack of education limits them to—excellent ward maids and orderlies, and, with an educated class of gentlewomen introduced as nurses, and the sisters left in charge of the housekeeping, which they do so well, the hospitals of Italy would rank with those of any country.

THE NEW POLYCLINIC HOSPITAL IN ROME

ROME has just completed a truly magnificent and model hospital, to accommodate twelve hundred patients and to unite in one all of the various clinics for the students of medicine which are now scattered over the city. It was not yet ready for the reception of patients in February, when we visited it, but was practically complete.

It is built according to the very latest dictates of science, and is not only hundreds of years ahead of everything else in Italy, but probably ranks with the few most complete and perfect hospitals in construction, sanitation, and practical detail. We know too that it will have medical science second to none, but the thought of the nursing it will probably have makes one sad, as one examines

the beautiful details and imagines the mussy slovenliness that will most likely prevail in the wards, for no suggestion of establishing a training-school suitable for this beautiful hospital had been made in the history and description of the hospital printed lately. It was projected in 1874 by Guido Baccelli, a minister of the government, and was begun in 1888.

The wards are situated, like the Johns Hopkins's, in the upper part of single pavilions, connected by corridors. The latter are three-storied, one underground being for service, the travel of food-carts, drug supplies, etc., the ground floor for the passage of the public, and the second floor for the patients. The main kitchen is in the centre of the general plan, and is fitted up with steam cookers of the latest German manufacture. The brass cookers are all suspended on a steel and iron circle in the middle of the room. Nothing touches the floor except the iron stoves with charcoal fires for broiling small meat, and the coffee-roaster with its charcoal bed, over which the coffee beans are hung in a revolving brass globe with an outer protecting shell, and the stove with its spit turned by a pulley-wheel, for roasting large meat over a charcoal fire, under a closed top and chimney hood. There is a very complete system of baths. Besides the small ordinary porcelain tubs for each ward there are special baths, alike for men and women. Of these, one is a deep marble pool, sunken in the floor, so that one goes up two marble steps and down five or six. It can give a complete immersion up to the neck, and is almost big enough to swim in. Then there are sitz-baths with spray douches—rectal, vaginal, spinal, and diaphragmatic. Either one or all of these at once can be given.

There is a skeleton bath, like a set of ribs, continued to the floor. The patient stands up in this while each rib sends forth a line of spray, and a rectal spray comes up from the floor and one from above comes down on the head. Then there are Turkish baths, ordinary sprays and showers, and a number of porcelain tubs. The mechanism for the special baths is all worked by a key-board at one end of the room, where also there is a pressure-regulator and a thermometer to get the correct degree of heat wanted. All over the entire institution all the hot-water pipes are painted in blue, and the cold-water pipes in pink.

The wards, intended for eighteen beds, each have four small rooms as well, one of four beds and the others for a single patient, a little kitchen (and so pretty), and a small disinfecting-room of its own. This is for the first disinfection of clothing before sending to the laundry, and the disinfection apparatus, which stands in the middle of the room, first expels by means of a special extractor all the air contained in the interstices of the material, and then steams it. The soiled articles for the laundry (which is fitted up with the best steam appliances) descend through a chute into a receptacle.

The lavatories, water-closets, and slop-hoppers are very complete and convenient. A small room or closet is arranged near each ward for keeping the vessels in which are kept discharges for the physician to inspect. These vessels are placed in an iron casket which is in communication with the ventilating pipes of the drainage system. A granite bowl and drain-pipe in the same room receives these materials when they are to be thrown away. The walls of the room are faced half-way up with slabs of granite.

Details like this show that the practical details for getting work done have been very carefully thought out, and every department shows the same scientific forethought in all details, and the same perfect finish as to materials



ONE OF MISS BAXTER'S ITALIAN NURSES

used. It will be the greatest pity if it does not have a nursing service capable of appreciating it all and of keeping it in the exquisite order that it should be kept in.

HOW TO TRAVEL ON LITTLE MONEY

(Continued from page 481)

BAGGAGE.

ONE who wishes to travel abroad economically must establish a rigid system as to baggage. ("Luggage," the English call it most aptly, for new light shines on the word when one sees how it has to be lugged about.)

Baggage is a nuisance, however one fixes it. It is a nuisance to have baggage and it is a nuisance to have none. Those who travel with trunks have perpetual expenses and small annoyances. Those who go without have few clothes. However, the latter plan is more conducive to happiness if one wants to see the country at small expense.

There are only some inconsiderable districts in Northern Europe where one is allowed by the railroads enough free baggage to carry a trunk on one's ticket as we do at home. Almost everywhere trunks or boxes which are not carried in the hand are charged for by weight: at every starting-point they must be weighed and paid for, and this cost counts up quite alarmingly, even for small trunks, besides being a trouble. Then, as to hand-bags, if one has several, or large, heavy ones, it is not always possible to carry them oneself. The porters at the stations must help to carry them, and each time that a bag is picked up by a porter, if it is only for a few steps, he must be paid two or three cents for each article, and these little items count up, especially when one gets in and out of cars, boats, cabs, etc., a number of times in a day.

Therefore, clothing and belongings must be carefully planned on a small and simple basis, and it is surprising to see with what a small amount of baggage an experienced traveller can be comfortable and look respectable.

The economical traveller starts out with a simple, short, tailor-made or home-made dress of tweed or serge, of a color suitable for winter and summer, and with a coat to match. As hats take up room, none need be taken except on the head. It should therefore be simple and unpretending. A judicious variety of blouses—one of flannel, one or two of silk, and a couple of wash material—will give the needed change to the toilet. Then an extra wrap is always needed, and for rainy countries a waterproof of some kind. One lighter-weight dress skirt can easily be carried, even with hand baggage, to put on in the house.

No great supply of underclothing need be carried about, for laundering can always be done on short notice and is cheap. (It is not always fine laundering, so underclothes should be plain.) Worn-out garments can always be easily replaced. To be sure, one may argue that it costs less to take one's whole supply and pay the porter than to buy new ones here and there. For long stay, when one spends considerable time in one place, this holds good, but for continuous moving about and steady travel it is usually thought best to carry a light outfit and replace what is necessary. It is easier and pleasanter every way to be only lightly weighted with hand baggage; one can get in and out of cars more expeditiously, get settled more quickly and easily, and be much more independent of porters and cabmen. Cabs are cheap, to be sure, but street-cars are cheaper,

and I have seen travellers take everything needed for a three-weeks' jaunt in a bag which they could easily carry themselves.

For longer trips each person could carry one small grip or roll, and pack their other things into one or two larger bags, which could be given to the porter.

When it is necessary to take a trunk, this should be small and of convenient shape. It need not go everywhere the traveller goes, like Mary's little lamb, but can meet her at points where she intends to make a stay. All the railroads send trunks as slow freight, as well as by express, and the former is the cheapest way of getting a trunk about. It really costs very little (depending somewhat on the weight), and storage is only twenty-five cents a month. If one understands the language, one can attend to freighting the trunk oneself; however, as one must pay a cab to take her trunk to the station, it is just as cheap to have one of the transfer companies, of which there are several, do it, as they call for the trunk and deliver it.

So, then, with a trunk sent about by slow freight to meet one for prolonged stay, with a light-weight hand-bag which one can carry easily, and with the pieces which must be given to the porter as few in number as possible, the problem of baggage is reduced to its simplest terms.

LETTER

IN Rome and Naples I visited some of the dispensaries, as we call them, or "ambulatoria," as the Italian name is, for children. A number of these are entirely supported by private societies and individuals. In Rome Signora Celli goes three times a week to spend the day working in one of these dispensaries, where also one or two other volunteers go regularly to assist in making dressings, etc. A couple of nurses are engaged on the staff, and Signora Celli, being a graduate nurse, has general oversight. Several physicians are appointed, who attend every day, and a general clinic is held, all kinds of cases being treated. There is a bath, where the children can be bathed. Milk is also prepared under the physicians' directions and given to the mothers in certain cases, and they are instructed in the principles of feeding the children. (However, I have not seen any such complete plant for distributing milk for children, pasteurized or prepared according to special formulas, as those in Baltimore and New York under the Wilson Sanitarium management in the former, and the Good Samaritan Dispensary and Straus milk stations in the latter, but it would not be fair to compare with them these "ambulatoria," which are on a much smaller scale.)

There are also several beds for children who need to be kept for several days, and a nurse to take charge of them. The whole thing is established in an old convent which answers very well indeed for the purpose, and is situated in one of the poorest parts of Rome. It has a large service. There are five of these private ambulatoria for children in Rome, and all the money is raised by private endeavor. The American nurses in Rome told me that they often make bandages and dressings for this purpose when they are home from cases.

The one in Naples is quite unique, and could be so easily imitated that every settlement and district nursing centre at home ought to establish one. It does not take a general service, but specializes on rachitic children. The cases are selected by a physician and treated as long as he orders, then dismissed by him when proper to do so. He is not there every day, but comes at fixed periods.

The treatment consists of a daily bath, rubbing, cod-liver oil, and a meal of hot bread and milk, and it is wonderful to see the improvement in these cases.

One of Miss Baxter's graduate nurses is in charge of this work, with a couple of assistants. They have a suite of rooms fitted up for the work, with bathroom, kitchen, and a large waiting-room very cannily arranged, so that the mothers can help without being in the way. The mothers undress their own children, and hand them in turn through a large window opening into the bathroom. After the bath and rub are given the children are handed back through the window to the mothers, who dress them again. In this way the work can be put through very expeditiously. The bath is ordered by the physician. Some cases get plain and some salt hot baths. After all the baths are given the children are placed at a table and get first their prescribed dose of cod-liver oil or emulsion, and then their bowls of hot bread and milk.

The results are most satisfactory, and the nurses are enthusiastic over the work. The number of cases taken is limited by the money in hand, usually from fifteen to twenty-five cases in a day. With a larger income the society could enlarge its work greatly, as there is great demand among the poor mothers for this treatment, and many cases have to be put off.

L. L. D.



CONCERNING THE ETIOLOGY OF PERTUSSIS.—The *Interstate Medical Journal* says: "Reyher (*Jahrbuch für Kinderheilk.*, October, 1903) reviews the literature and reports the results of his investigations concerning the specific etiologic factor of whooping-cough. He is able to confirm the claim of Czaplewské (made in 1897) that the specific germ is a small, non-motile, short rod, with egg-shaped rounded ends, which, morphologically as well as tinctorially, somewhat resembles the influenza bacillus. Distinct differences in cultural growth, as well as in staining properties, serve to differentiate it from this germ, however."

HOW A PULLMAN CAR IS CLEANED.—The *New York Sun*, quoted by the *Medical Record*, says: "The management of the Pullman Company, in controversy of the recent criticisms of the sanitary condition of their cars, has sent out this statement of just what the process of cleaning a Pullman car is: As soon as a Pullman car arrives at its destination it is entirely stripped, the carpets are beaten and aired, and the interior of the car is thoroughly scrubbed with soap and water. The blankets are taken out of the car and are thoroughly blown out with compressed air at a ninety-pound pressure. It is impracticable to wash them after every trip, but they go to the laundry several times a year, which is oftener than is the case with hotel blankets. All linen is renewed each trip. Every case of sickness in a car, however trivial, is followed by the anti-septic cleansing of the section occupied by the sick person, and the entire car is sprayed with formaldehyde. As a further sanitary precaution, in the newer cars of the company purely decorative draperies are being omitted, and the necessary ones, such as berth curtains, are being made of a lighter material which does not hold dust or odors."